

San Francisco Tribal Art Show 2024

Chris Boylan

Oceanic Art



Chris Boylan - Oceanic Art

Sydney Australia



I live in Sydney, Australia. Due to my many travels, I work from a home office and Sydney warehouse rather than a permanent gallery. My schedule (apart from pandemic lockdowns) includes several trips to Papua New Guinea and various Pacific regions, with regular exhibitions in Australia and overseas. An avid field collector, I still greatly enjoy these Pacific odysseys and always come across some fine and interesting artworks. Having said that, old collections and small auctions within. Australia can also be a rich resource for artworks.

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NB. All prices
are in \$ US

Design: Grumpy Wombat, Sydney
Photos: Jenni Carter, Sydney



1. FIGHTING SHIELD
OBURA, EASTERN HIGHLANDS, PNG

This is an old shield, carved from a wood called verafa. This wood is a softer wood, hence the thickness of the shield, but it has a quite useful tight grain that holds an arrow or spear, and stops it penetrating.

The Fore people inhabit a remote corner of the Eastern Highlands, in proximity to the small station of Obura, where this shield was collected in the late 1970s/early 1980s. There is a small ticket attached that reads: "Asaia village Obura-Warinara, more than 50 spears". There are numerous spear/arrow points embedded in the shield. On the back of the shield are the remnants of what was previously a small bag and a support rope for extra arrows.

The painted design is typical abstract motif of this region. These designs, with central segmented circle and small radiating lines, are said to represent "The Sun", one of the "Creator Spirits". However, the owner has painted one motif round (typical) and one more square, which is quite atypical, which gives this shield a quite extraordinary dynamic.

The top edge of this shield is trimmed with a band of darkened pandanus leaves, stitched on with fine fibre, and the carrying sling knotted through two holes.

Collected by local Kamano chief, Kamda Kubo in the late 1970s / early 1980s.

145 x 60 cm (58" x 24")

\$ 4,200





2 . CEREMONIAL BASKET HOOK
MURIK LAKES, MOUTH OF SEPIK RIVER, PNG
EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The hook has many layers of paint; the most recent is a pale green; various shades of green enamel paint are often found used around the time of the Second World War (probably camouflage paint). Below this are other layers of paint that show its use probably over several generations. It is carved from hardwood, one reason it has survived so well over all these years.

The main male figure is typical of the Murik Lake villages. A hole goes through the figure from the top comes out between the figure's legs. A hanging rope or cane was knotted through, strapping the hook from the rafters of the Spirit House. This hook would no doubt hold offerings to both the spirits and Big Man of the Spirit House – offerings of betel nut or food.

Below is a possum or cuscus, most probably a clan totem and ancestral being.

55 x 23 x 23 cm (22" x 10" x 10")

\$ 6,500





3. WOVEN MASK (WITH FINE CHAINS, GALUT) ABELAM, PNG

This small finely woven mask decorated with a beard of fine chains is worn in ceremony at the back of the head by Abelam male dancers. Large feather headdresses, made on a cane base, are worn by the dancers. These headdresses have a circular cane ring that fits over of the man's head. The galut covers the dancer's head at this point and the chains hang down onto the dancer's shoulders.

Sometimes the galut are confused with yam masks, as they are similar, but they have a very different ceremonial function.

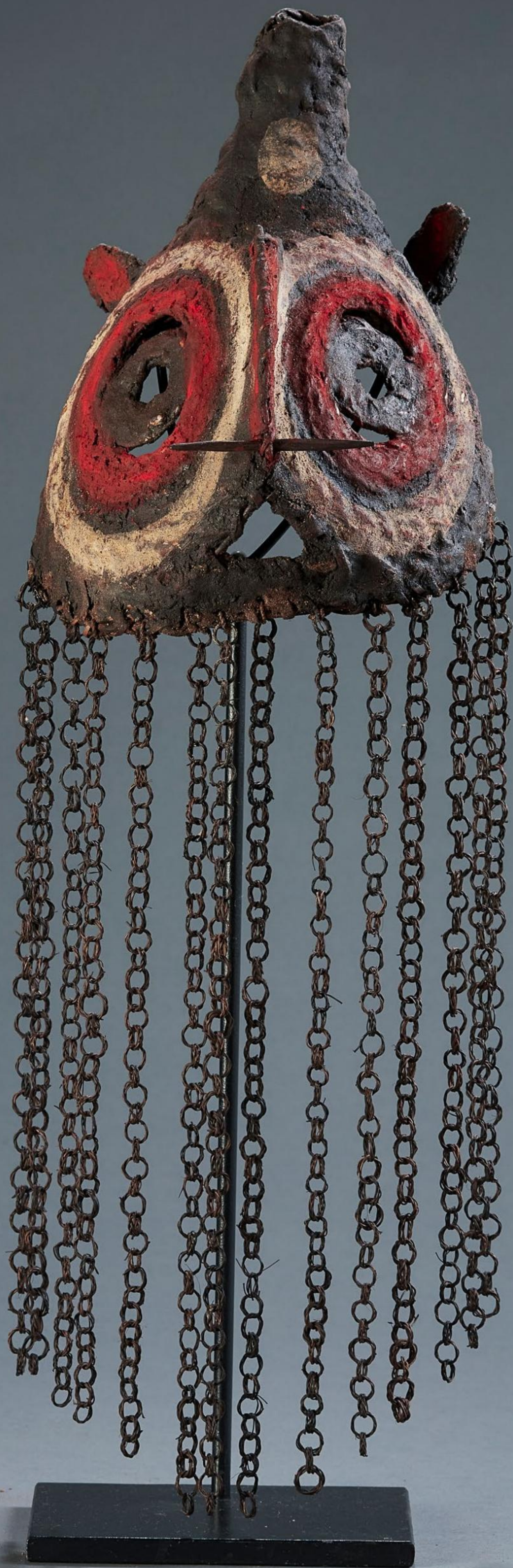
Size: 48 x 14 x 12 cm (19" x 6" x 5")

\$ 4,800



Abelam dancer(s) with large headdress.
The galut is worn on the back of the head, with the chains falling onto the dancer's shoulders.





4. PHANTOM SHIELD

WAHGI VALLEY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS

“Phantom” is emblazoned in red, outlined in black, at the top of the shield. The Phantom figure itself stands strongly, with two pistols raised protectively. He exudes a calm strength, the strength and determination of a warrior to win; it projects a feeling of invincibility. This is how the Phantom was viewed by Wahgi warriors, as the ‘Man Who Cannot Die’. This is in fact written at the base of the shield in pidgin, “MAN INO SAVE LO DAI” which literally means “man who does not know how to die” or simply, Man Who Cannot Die.

Comics featuring the Phantom became available in the New Guinea Highlands from the late 1970s onwards, and also featured as comic strips in the one national newspaper, The Post Courier. The Phantom character equated with much of the traditional cosmology of Wahgi culture. For example, he lived in the Skull cave, high in the mountains; this is where ancestors were buried and their spirits eventually gravitated to. The Phantom became iconic emblem of victory and invincibility to the degree that the first generation of Wahgi Warriors who were literate, began to paint the Phantom (and other “new” motifs) on war shields.

Size: 163 x 61 cm (65” x 25”)

\$ 5,000



PHANTOM



5. TWO WOVEN HELMUT MASKS

BABA, ABELAM, PNG

a) The larger of the Baba masks is from Wosera, the southern Abelam, and is among the largest of such masks ever collected. It is tightly woven and has an imposing presence. It has a large bulbous form topped with a cassowary feather headdress. Its major feature is the strong projecting face and nose which is painted with intense red pigments. There are fine details such as the globular eyes, ears and horn on the forehead.

b) The smaller Baba mask is finer in many ways, with an elegant face and fine details woven within it, as well as two finely formed curved ear ornaments. This mask originated from the northern Abelam who live in the mountainous Prince Alexander Ranges. Yellow dominates the mask, but it is surrounded by details in red and white. A cassowary headdress completes this fine Baba mask.

a) 69 x 31 x 54 cm (28" x 13" x 22")

a) \$ 1,200

b) 48 x 24 x 32 cm (19" x 10" x 13")

b) \$ 1,200



Baba Mask being danced in ceremony, with long grass skirt that sways with the dancer.





6. LARGE NUKUMA MASK
WASHKUK HILLS, UPPER SEPIK RIVER, PNG
EARLY 20TH CENTURY

These wooden masks were an integral part of the Nogwi ceremony, the third and final (and most sacred) of the yam fertility ceremonies that were held annually after the harvest to insure continued fertility. Several platforms were constructed inside (or beside) the Ceremonial House just prior to the Nogwi ceremony beginning; one platform was decorated with decorated ancestor skulls and wooden heads. In later years only wooden heads were used. Douglas Newton records this in "Crocodile and Cassowary" (1971), and shows several examples of Kwoma wooden heads, but none from the Nukuma, which were larger and more impressive. Flanges with holes at the top and bottom of the mask were to attach it securely to the platform's framework. Like the ancestor skulls, these masks were also adorned with shell jewellery, hence pierced ears and septum.

Size: 76 x 29 x 16 cm (31" x 12" x 7")

\$ 4,800





7. DOUBLE PIG FIGURE AND STINGRAY TROBRIAND ISLANDS, PNG

Both these figures were carved in colonial times, essentially for sale to the colonialists. The Massim culture has always produced some extraordinarily elegant sculptural forms for traditional use. And some of their best carvers did produce some superb sculptures in that period in the early to middle 20th Century for sale. Both these figures attain a high sculptural level that suggests they were made by important artists.

a) A double pig, in fact two copulating pigs. Both are carved with fine abstract motifs over their surfaces. The smaller (male) pig is quite extraordinary with very large back legs and tiny front legs holding firmly onto the female pig. It is a wonderfully conceived sculpture.

b) A stingray figure, very elegant in form, with quite prominent eyes and some simple design motifs. The tail has been damaged in the past, but it does not diminish the piece greatly.

20 x 50 x 13 cm (8" x 20" x 6")

25 x 11 x 3 (10" x 4.5" x 1/5")

a) \$ 1,600

b) \$ 600





8. THREE WAR CLUBS
KANAK, NEW CALEDONIA
19TH CENTURY

Kanak clubs are among the most interesting forms of Melanesian clubs, with the two predominant forms being the bird-headed club and these, the phallic form. They are weapons of war and always carved from hardwood that, with age, generally becomes dark honey-coloured or brown with a beautiful overall patina. This group shows well the various forms, from straight to very slightly bowed, to very curved. Sometimes these may be described as “mushroom-headed” clubs but the generally accepted term is phallic or “penis-headed club”. Two of the clubs have fine pecked motifs below the head.

a) 89 x 6 cm (36" x 2.5")

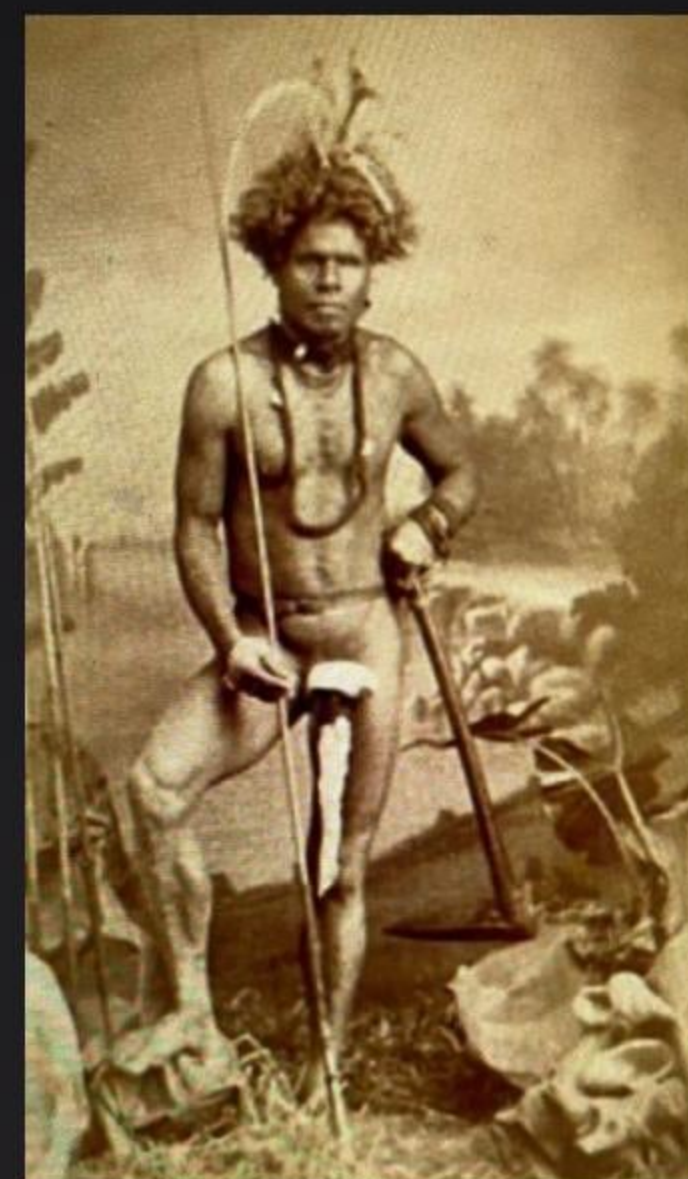
b) 83 x 6 cm (34" x 2.5")

c) 76 x 7 cm (30" x 2.5")

a) \$ 750

b) \$ 600

c) \$ 750



Kanak warrior, New Caledonia, 1870s.
Photo: Allan Hughan (1834-1883)



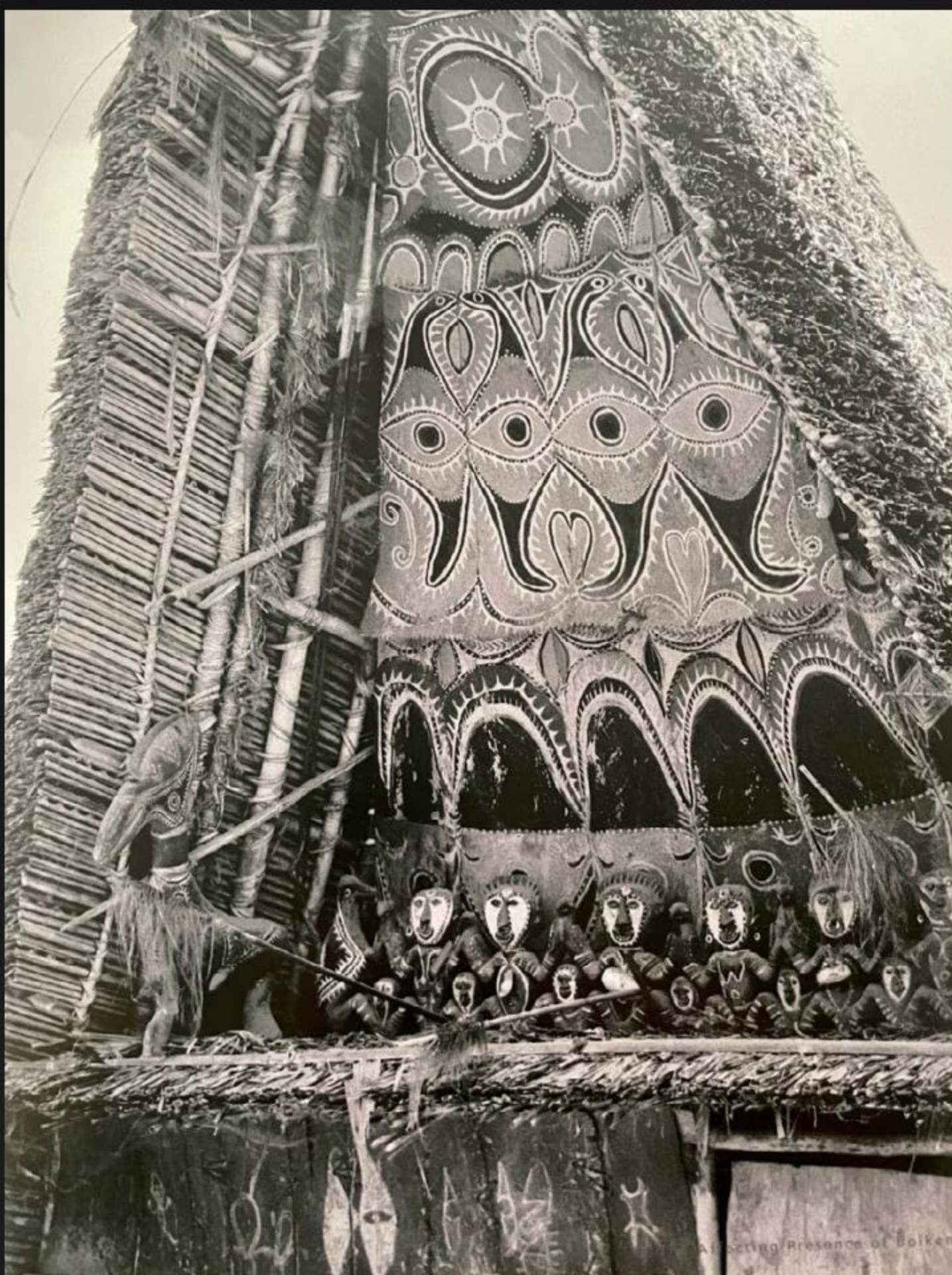
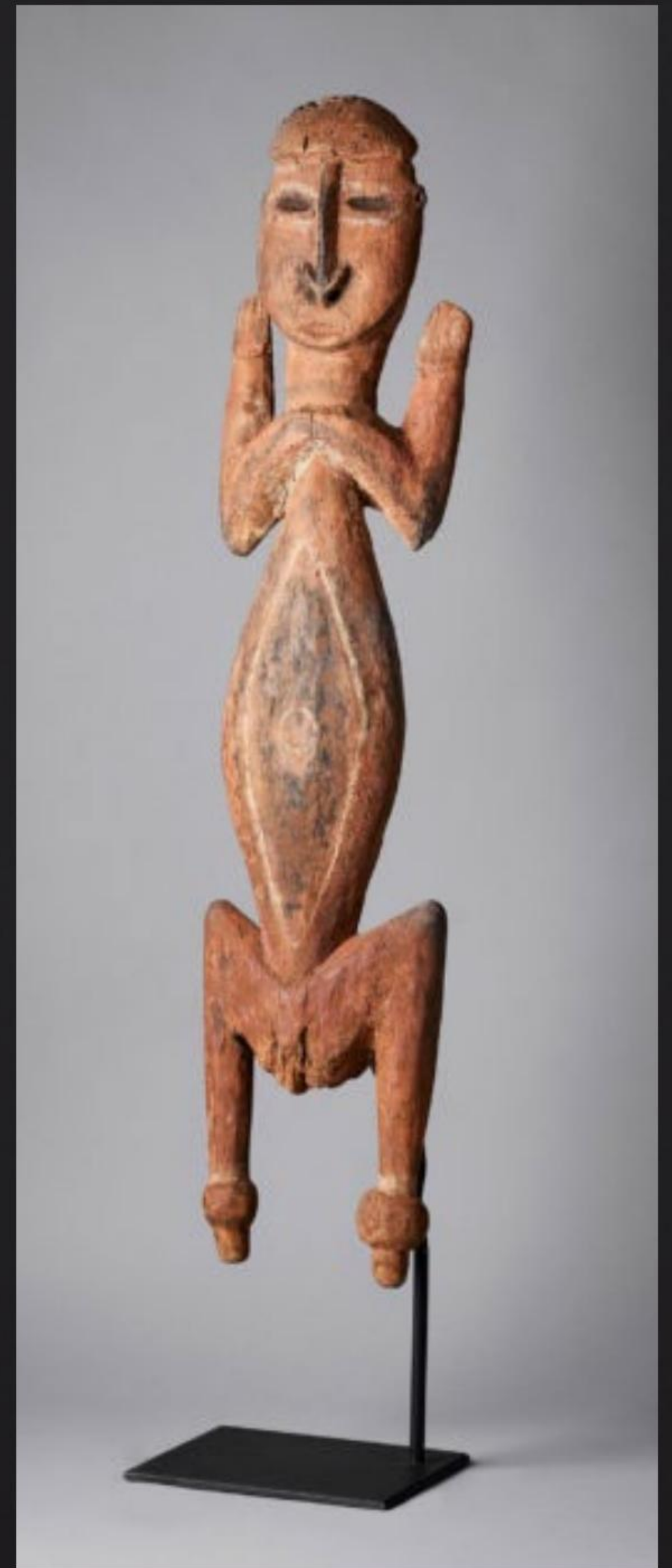


9. RITUAL FEMALE FIGURE
NAGUM-BOIKEN, PNG
19TH/EARLY 20THC

This is a stone-carved pre-contact figure; the paintwork is soft and, with age, has become an integral part of the wood. The elongated form and open face make it one of the more elegant examples of extant *Boiken* figures. *Boiken* figurative sculptures are generally more abstract in both facial and overall forms than the neighbouring Abelam, and southern Iatmul forms.

Size: 76 x 19 (31" x 8")

\$ 7,000



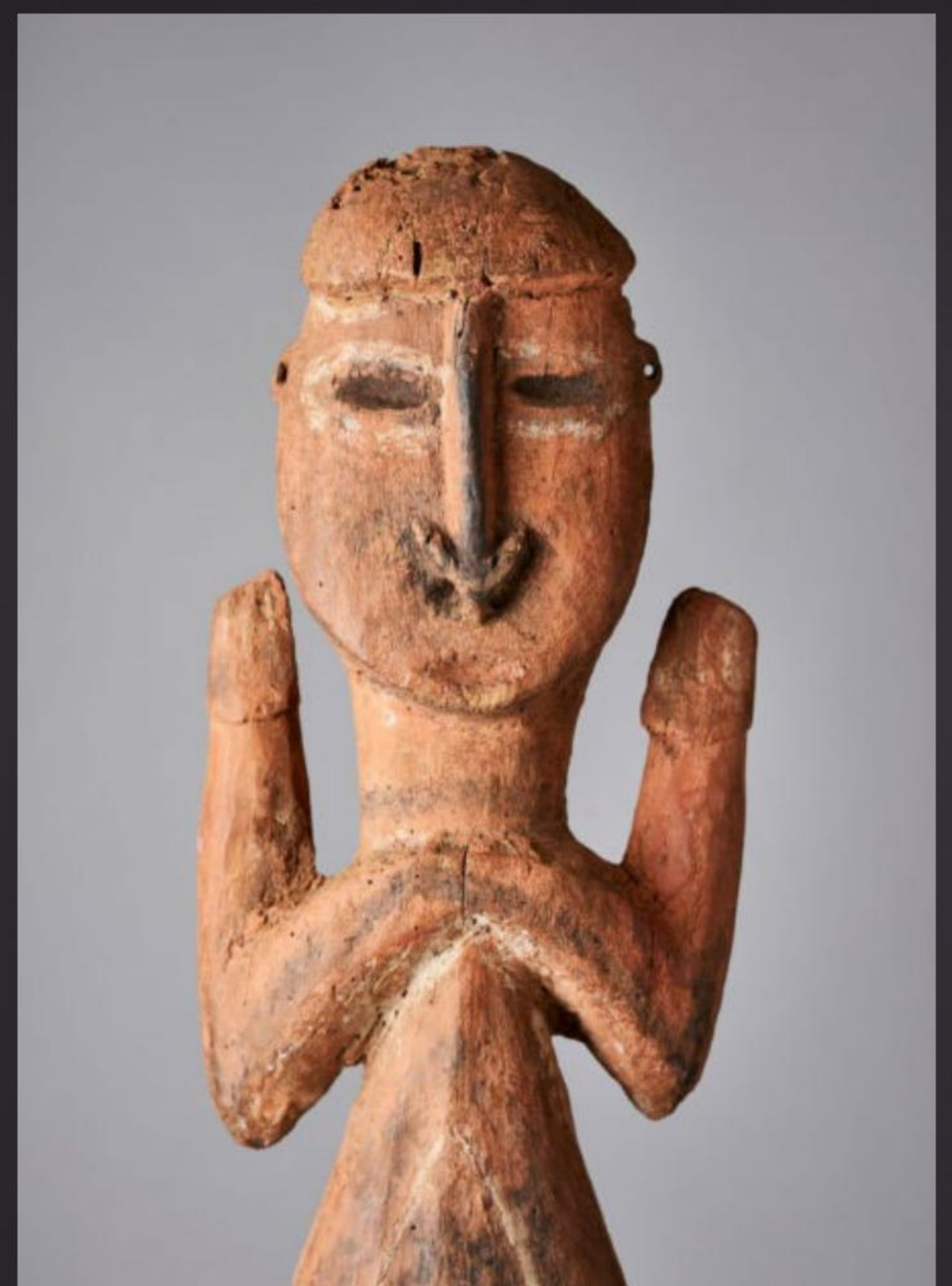
A Boiken Ceremonial House lintel, showing the typical Yangoru-style, a figure with squatting abstract form and open, simple face.

Boiken Ceremonial House, Halik.

Photo: Douglas Newton 1970

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The Douglas Newton Archive. All Rights Reserved.





10 TWO RITUAL FIGURES
MENDI VALLEY, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, PNG. C.1970S

These figures, made of cane, bamboo and tightly bound pandanus leaves and decorated similar to those they portray are often referred to as "payback dolls", reputedly made of people whose death must be avenged. Some collected earlier in the 1960s (by Stan Moriarty) seem to be more connected with male and female cult rituals.

Size: 87 x 18 x 11 82 x 18 x 9

\$ 2,400 pair



Figure made of bark, leaves resin on a wood framework; seen mounted on a carrying stick for dance.

Photo: Stan Moriarty, 1966.

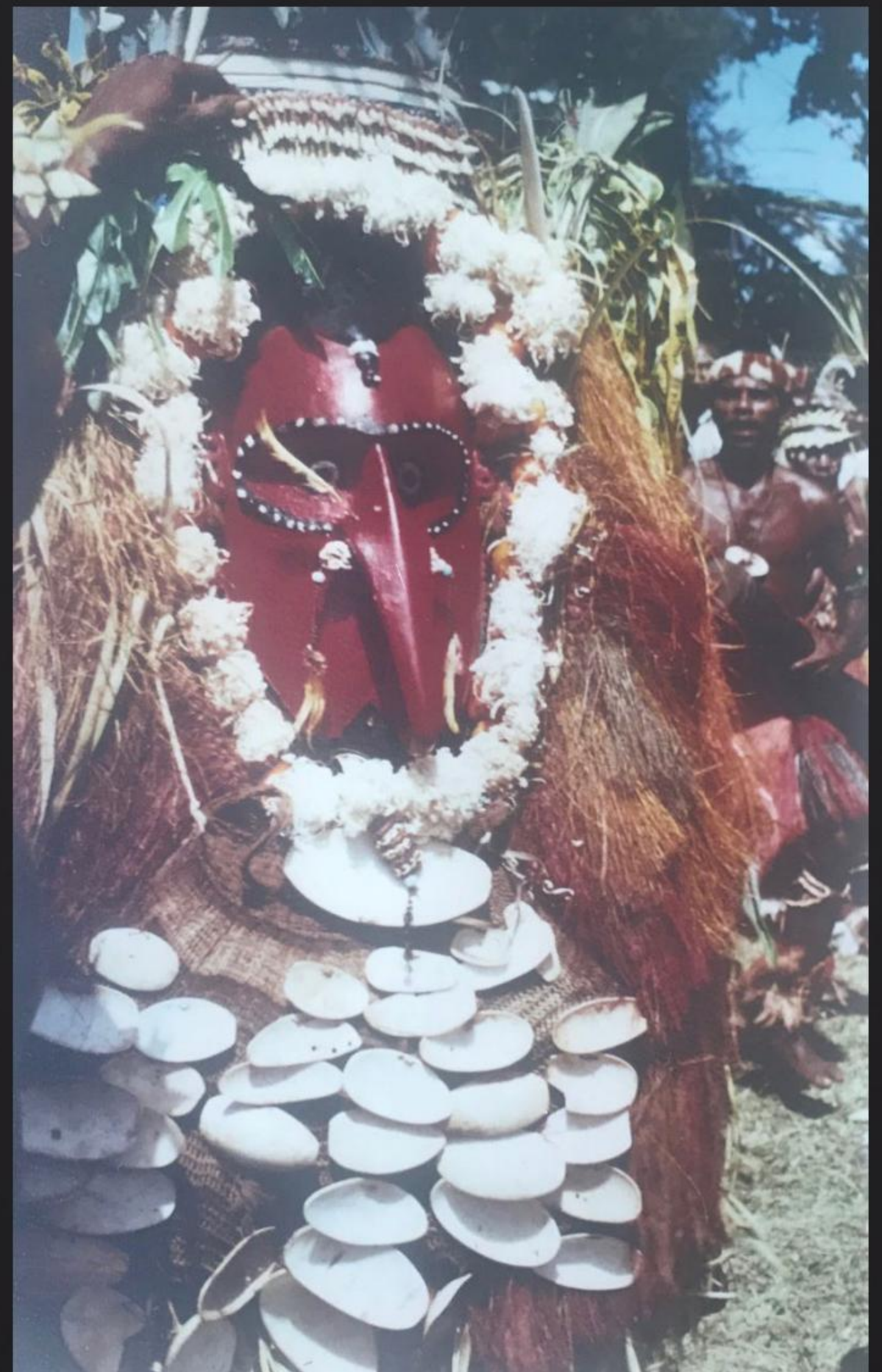


11. DANCE MASK
RAMU RIVER, PNG
19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY

This is an ancient, well used mask from the region around the mouth of the Ramu River. It is dominated on the forehead by a lizard, beautifully rendered. The mask itself is strong and impressive. The eyes would once have had pearlshell eyes. There is a little deterioration on the upper left side at the back, which is quite stable, and does not detract from the piece. It has all the attributes of 19thC, but certainly after the German arrival as it is steel cut; this is why I suggest 19th/early 20thC.

Size: 65 x 24 x 13 cm (26" x 10" x 5")

\$ 6,000



In Ramu River ceremony, these simple red masks are connected into a vast conical tower, carried by a male dancer, who can see through the cut-out eyes. This tall towering dance costume is decorated with leaves, feathers, shells, and the dancer completely hidden by a long grass skirt. Photo: Marsha Berman, 1992.





12. FERTILITY FIGURE

MINDJA, WASHKUK HILLS, UPPER SEPIK RIVER, PNG

This is an old figure with a simplistic form when compared to others in museums, that give it a great strength and suggest it is an older Minja figure, probably dating back to the 1930s. There is some dry rot at the base, no doubt from standing in a hidden bush house for many years. These figure, never to be seen by women, were stored between ceremonies in small huts, along male-only footpaths through the jungle. After harvest of the yams in the Washkuk Hills, there were traditionally three ceremonies – essentially fertility ceremonies, to ensure future abundance. The second of these was the Minja ceremony.

In its overall form and details, it is one of the simplest of Minja's to be found, and this is the source of its artistic strength. The eyes and mouth are pieced through; the strong nose has a pierced septum for attachment of ornaments during ceremony; the flat face has a simple, raised chin; the upper and lower areas are edged with small triangles.

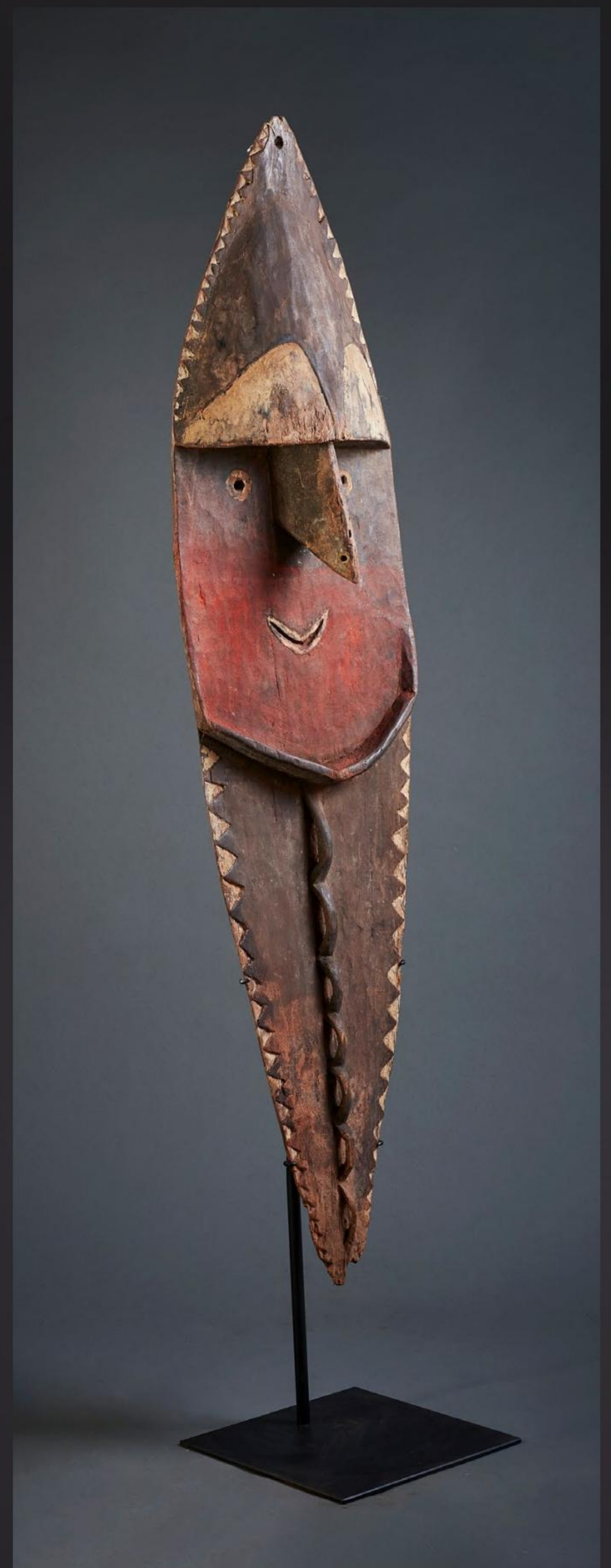
There is a ticket still attached that reads "Amaki 1971". It came from an old Queensland collection, but a collector who never visited PNG. It must have been acquired in the early 1970s when this piece first returned to Australia.

Size: 141 x 35 x 14 cm (56" x 14" x 6")

\$ 6,000



Minja ceremony
in Bangwis village,
1973
Photo: Ross Bowden
Reproduced with
permission from
Ross Bowden
Published: "Yena",
1983, by Ross
Bowden.





13. TWO EBONY MASSIM SWORD CLUBS
TROBRIAND ISLANDS
19TH / EARLY 20TH CENTURY

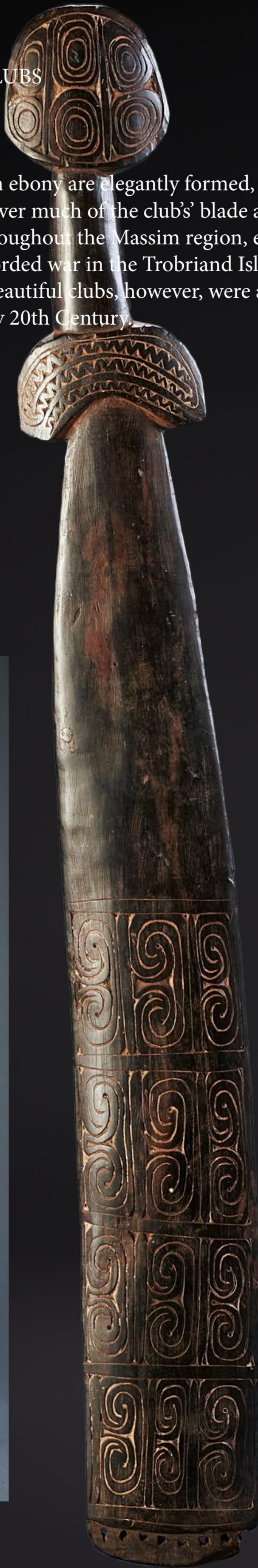
Both these Massim clubs are carved from ebony and are elegantly formed, with fine engraved motifs infilled with white lime. These curvilinear patterns cover much of the club's blade and also the handle and central curved lugs. Ebony clubs were traded widely throughout the Massim region, even though the Trobriand Islands remains as the main source. The last recorded war in the Trobriand Islands was in 1899. Many objects of war ceased to be made after this date. Such beautiful clubs, however, were also used in dance and probably continued to be carved well into the early 20th Century.

a) 64 x 12 cm (26" x 5")

b) 66 x 8 cm (27" x 4")

a) \$ 1,400

b) \$ 1,400





14. FIVE YAM MASKS

ABELAM, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Yam masks become the face of the yam, and the face of the spirit that directs fertility, in the ceremonial lining of large yams, immediately after harvest. They are woven from cane then painted in colourful pigments. In ceremony they may be further decorated with shells, feathers, and special leaves.

a) An unusual, idiosyncratic yam mask, with small spherical head on a much larger woven headdress, surrounded by a thick cassowary feather headdress. The face has a quizzical look. Blue and red pigments.

b) A very large yam mask, with a soaring woven headdress and a strong bird-like face. Red and yellow pigments.

c) A very old yam mask, with spired headdress. The edges retain some of the vine for inserting feathers during ceremony. Blue and pink pigments.

d) Miniature yam mask, orange, and yellow pigments.

e) Miniature yam mask, with conus shell, yellow. Red and black pigments.



- a) 26 x 27 x 9 cm (10" x 11" x 4")
- b) 62 x 27 x 26 cm (25" x 11" x 11")
- c) 38 x 18 x 11 cm (15" x 7" x 4.5")
- d) 14 x 10 x 6 cm (6" x 4" x 3")
- e) 13 x 10 x 9 cm (5" x 4" x 4")

- a) \$ 800
- b) \$ 1,400
- c) \$ 950
- d) \$ 450
- e) \$ 450





15. GIANT NASSA SHELL RING LOLOI
TOLAI PEOPLE, NEW BRITAIN, PNG

Nassa shells are used as part of the traditional currency of the Tolai people, even still today. They are important for Bride Price Payment – when the dowry is paid for a new wife and used also at important funerals or compensation payments. They are rarely sold or traded, and few are found outside Papua New Guinea, and their traditional use within Tolai society. They are of great value and highly prized.

Loloi are essentially money but constructed in a most ingenious and beautiful fashion. The form and fine detail of these Oceanic wealth rings resonate with contemporary abstract forms, and reflect that long connection between Oceanic and contemporary western art.

At important community events the Loloi are brought out for display and are presented to the wife's family as the most important part of a Bride Price, or, at compensation and funeral gatherings, used to pay debts to those who have helped through one's life.

At these ceremonies the shell lengths are unwound from the circular Loloi, and cut into sections, to be presented to the various participants.

Size: 67cm diameter x 11cm thick (27" x 4.5")

\$ 4,000



A Tolai funeral ceremony, showing Loloi that are soon to be presented to be shared among those participating.

Photo: Richard Parkinson c. 1900





16. SHIELD

MENDI VALLEY, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, PNG

This is an early post-contact shield that was collected by Ray Hughes in the Southern Highlands in the 1970s. Ray was one of Sydney's most flamboyant contemporary art dealers, who also had a passion for both Oceanic and African art. This shield came from his deceased estate, many years ago.

The shield glows with inner strength. There is a 3-dimensional outlined figure carved on the shield's surface, with an expressive face using some resin and seeds. An orange/red pigment, and some white, dominate the shield, with serrated triangular motifs around the figure.

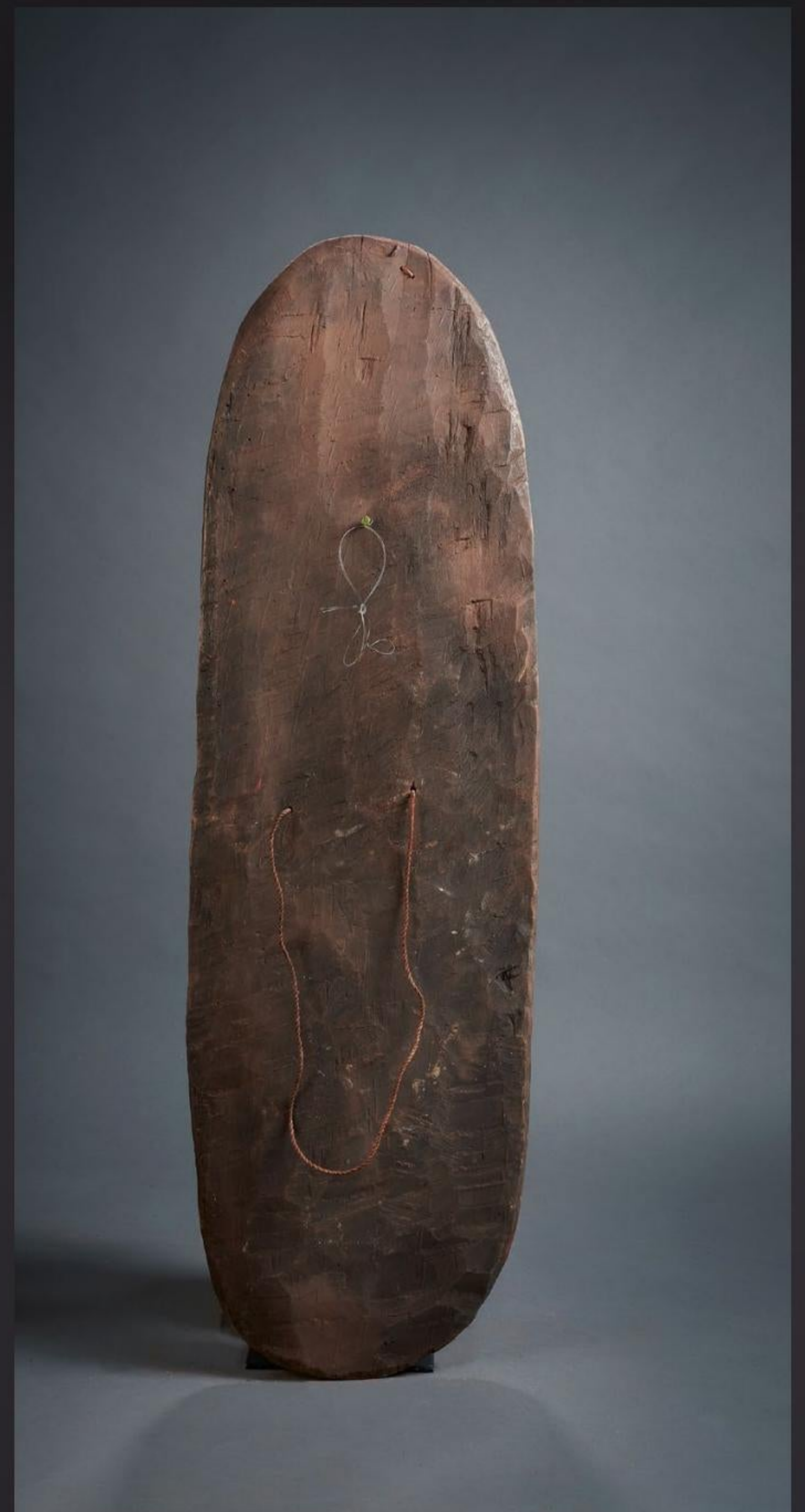
Only one area of the Southern Highlands, the Nembi Plateau, is known to carve shields with 3-dimensional figures. Hughes had no specific information on this shield, but it can safely be assumed that its origin is the Nembi Plateau. The shield is made of warr, a lighter wood, but having a tight grain, that holds any arrows that enter quite strongly. Shields throughout much of this region of the Southern Highlands are made from this wood, warr; and hence the name of shields is warrumbi (literally, "wall of warr").

Size: 122 x 35 cm (49" x 14")

\$4,000



Ray Hughes, celebrated Sydney art dealer (1946-2017)
Collected this shield c.1970s in Southern Highlands, PNG.





17. RITUAL FERNWOOD MASK EASTERN HIGHLANDS, PNG

In the New Guinea Highlands masks are invariably made of gourds or fernwood; never traditionally from wood as is common in coastal areas. Also, these masks were often made, then cast aside after the particular ceremony where they are used. Fernwood was used architecturally or in ceremonies where the mask was used outside in the landscape over some time. This particular mask was a part of the “sorcery trap” to capture or make powerless sorcery spells sent from enemy terrain. They were especially important at ceremonial times. Young warriors at initiation ceremonies were particularly vulnerable to enemy spells that would harm them, and these “sorcery traps” were set up along pathways that faced the enemy territory. These Fernwood masks represented strong spirits of the mountains or bush, generally with wide eyes and mouths that could capture these spells. The open mouths often used pig teeth or quartz-like stones to imitate teeth. Pig tusks, jungle moss and seeds were often part of these mask “traps”.

Size: 43 x 23 x 22 cm (18” x 10’x 9.5”)

\$ 2,800



New Guinea Highland masks were invariably simple, idiosyncratic, and often discarded after use.

Photo: Stam Moriarty, 1966.





18. ANCESTRAL BOARD
TTITHEBIA, PAPUAN GULF, PNG

A well carved, somewhat asymmetric figure from the Goabari Island area of the western Papuan Gulf. It has the hallmarks of having being carved from the side of a canoe; old war canoes, no longer in use, were generally used as it was considered they had inherent power of protection. These flat engraved boards are essentially ancestor figures and were traditionally housed in clan cubicles with the Ravi, the Men's Ceremonial House.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| a) 96 x 23 cm (37" x 9.5") | a) \$ 1,200 |
| b) 71 x 20.5 cm (29" x 8.5") | b) \$ 800 |
| c) 61 x 15.5 cm (25.5" x 6") | c) \$900 |
| d) 77 x 18 cm (32" x 7.5") | d) \$800 |



Papuan Gulf Spirit House, Urama Island
Photo: Frank Hurley, 1923.





19. TWO WOOD YAM MASKS

ABELAM, PNG

These elegant wooden yam masks with a handle projection at the base are found east of the Abelam, among a group known as the Bukie, who were referred to by Margaret Mead as the Arapesh. Their wood masks are among the most beautiful of this region, where the growing of large yams equates with spiritual benevolence, and they are used to decorate these yams at the annual yam lining ceremony.

a) An elongated mask with the central face framed top and bottom with two flanges with red triangles. The face itself is simply carved with eyes, nose and mouth, painted yellow with fine white dots.

b) A very similar form to a) with slightly more elaborate paintwork in red and white.

a) 28 x 8 x 6 cm (12" x 4" x 3")

b) 35 x 8 x 7 cm (14" x 4" x 3")

a) \$ 750

b) \$ 950



Abelam wood yam mask used in Yam Lining Ceremony.
Photo: Dr. Fred Gerrits, 1973.





20. TWO TRADITIONAL LADELS (WITH CARVED HANDLES)
ADMIRALTY ISLANDS, PNG

Two finely carved spoons from the Admiralty Islands. These ceremonially carved spoons were always elaborately carved, with fine engraved designs, and painted colourfully in an orange-pink, with details in black and white.

a) A wide flat handle with open carving and fine geometric engraved motifs. Carved both sides.
Early 20th C. ex-Daalder collection, Adelaide.

b) A very 3-dimensional handle in the form of a flying fish, with fine engraved geometric motifs over the whole fish form.

Early 20th C. ex-Alex Philips, Melbourne.

a) 41 x 8 x 9 cm (17" x 4" x 3")

b) 46 x 12 x 21 cm (19" x 5" x 9")

a) \$ 1,200

b) \$ 2,500





21. THREE ABORIGINAL MESSAGE BOARDS
CHURRINGAS, AUSTRALIA
ALL 19TH CENTURY

Churringas hold information within their carved form about ceremony and landscape. Aboriginals, being nomadic, generally left these sacred boards in a cave or rock shelter to which they would return as some time the following year.

a) Fine rectangular designs, Western Australia. The back is finely carved by stone or shell.
Ex-Black’s Museum, Mt Gambier, South Australia.

b) A tall, pointed churinga from near Anna Plains station, inland from Broome, Western Australia.
Collected by Ray Williams, who traded it with William Dunmall (1928-1996), collection number 029.

c) With interlocking finely engraved rectangles, La Grange Bay, Western Australia.
ex-Melbourne private collection.

a) 58 x 7 cm (24” x 3”)	a) \$ 1,000
b) 69 x 7 cm (28” x 3”)	b) \$ 1,250
c) 51 x 6 cm (22” x 3”)	c) \$ 1,000





22. THREE CARVED CASSOWARY BONE DAGGERS SEPIK RIVER REGION, PNG

Three old daggers, carved from the leg bone of a cassowary, each with a patina acquired over generations of use. Traditionally used in warfare, but also ceremonially worn in a woven upper armband.

a) From Kaup village, at the mouth of the Sepik River. These are instantly recognised as the work of one artist in Kaup several generations ago. Usually a bird head, with carved rings below.

b) Abelam dagger, with essentially geometric engraving. The double circles can represent an ancestral being. A hint of red paint.

c) Abelam dagger, with essentially geometric engraving, with a face at the top, and lower motifs suggesting ancestor figures.



a) 40 x 5 cm (16" x 2")
b) 35 x 5 cm (14" x 2")
c) 35 x 5 cm (14" x 2")

a) \$ 700
b) \$ 800
c) \$ 800





23. TWO OLD SACRED WATER POTS

FIJI

19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY

A unique style of pottery was made on the islands of Viti Levu and Bau in Fiji. Both pots are finely made and covered in what appears to be a glaze. These were used by high-ranking chiefs as drinking vessels. The form of these pots symbolises tabua (whale teeth), double canoes or various fruits and signify the tapu nature of these chiefs. These pots were made in certain locations by women of particular clan groups. They were fired at low temperature, with no true glaze being possible. The Fijians applied a “varnish” in the form of a resin made from the dakua tree which is rubbed over the vessel while hot, and gives it waterproof quality.

a) These elongated portions, joined along the sides, and with an arched handle above are called saqa drua tabua. Their shape relates to the important and valuable whale tooth pendants, tabua. The opening on the handle is for filling the oil or water; those below for pouring. It is covered in elaborate motifs.

b) More spherical in form, this particular pot with two orifices at the top; these are called saqa ni wai. This pot is more utilitarian, but still has a ring of small ornaments around its waist.

a) 9 x 17 x 15 cm (4" x 7" x 6")

a) \$ 850

b) 14 x 9 x 9 cm (6" x 4" x 4")

b) \$ 400





24. TWO RITUAL POTTERY WASHKUK HILLS, UPPER SEPIK RIVER, PNG

Both collected in 1960s in the Upper Sepik from the Kwoma and Nukuma people, the inland group of the Washkuk Hills people. Both are fine older objects from the elaborate fertility ceremonies of the Washkuk Hills people.

a) Ritual pottery form (Nukuma), with pierced eyes and mouth and a large (typical Washkuk, phallic in form) nose. The pot's form is conical, with holes around the base for mounting on a post or platform. It is in the Mindja ceremony in conjunction with other important wooden figures. (See number 6 in this catalogue). Red predominates, with some outlines in white.

b) Ritual Flute (Kwoma), a very rare object used as a musical instrument producing the "voice of the spirits" during the Mindja ceremonies. The pottery flute has a wonderful fluid Minja face with large, curved nose at the front, and a pig-like face at the back. Overall, and especially around the top blowing hole, it is elaborately decorated with raised and engraved geometric designs. Painted in typical red and white. A few of the serrations towards the back are chipped (and over-painted) but otherwise this pottery piece is in perfect condition.

a) 24 x 17 x 15 cm (10" x 7" x 6")

b) 13 x 30 x 9 cm (6" x 12" x 6")

a) \$ 950

b) \$ 1,800





25. OCEANIC COMBS

a) and b) Ceremonial combs, kafu qwaroa, Solomon Islands. These are worn by men and boys in ceremony, not to comb the hair. They are made of fine split black wood, woven with yellow and black very fine orchid stem.

c) and d) Ceremonial combs, Abelam, Papua New Guinea. Worn by men, especially young initiates, in ceremony.

a) 18 x 6 cm (7.5" x 2.5")

b) 17 x 5 cm (7" x 2.5")

c) 31 x 8 x 8 cm (13" x 3" x 3")

d) 30 x 4 x 5 cm (12" x 2" x 2")

a) \$ 250

b) \$ 200

c) \$ 450

d) \$ 450



Decorated combs are worn in combination with these elaborate body ornaments. A young male initiate shown here.





26. THREE YAM MASKS ABELAM, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Yam masks become the face of the yam, and the face of the spirit that directs fertility, in the ceremonial lining of large yams, immediately after harvest. They are woven from cane then painted in colourful pigments. In ceremony they may be further decorated with shells, feathers and special leaves.

a) Almost spherical in form, with upper headdress, bulbous eyes using nassa shells, Green and pink pigments.

b) Larger yam mask, with thick cassowary feather headdress. Blue, pink and yellow pigments.

c) Miniature yams mask, classic form in red and blue pigments.

a) 14 x 13 x 12 cm (5" x 4.5" x 4.5")

b) 21 x 23 x 8 cm (9" x 10" x 4")

c) 15 x 13 x 10 cm (6" x 4.5" x 4")

a) \$ 800

b) \$ 1,000

c) \$ 500



Yam Lining Ceremony, with decorated yam masks becoming the spiritual face of the yam.

Photo: Dr. Fred Gerrits, 1973





27. SHIELD

WARRUMBI, MENDI VALLEY, PNG

These shields, called warrumbi (generally made from the wood of the warr tree) invariably oval in form. This is a fine old shield, early contact period, with good patina. The design is typical Mendi abstract design, with the outer lines engraved into the surface of the shield. Note the fine pecked detail, that covers the red areas. The design is dominated by a segmented central circle, above are two rounded triangular forms painted white and below two semi-circles painted red. These abstract motifs do have underlying meanings.

Size: 122 x 33 cm (49" x 14")

\$ 4,000



Ancient rock painting from the New Guinea Highlands, probably thousands of years old, showing the same segmented circular design found on fighting shields.





28. BALSA YAM MASK
WOSERA, PNG

Finely carved yam mask with a free standing cockatoo on the head. Made from light balsa-like wood, that allows a larger sculpture form when decorating the yam. It has a wonderful blockish sculptural form, with cubist face, and similar matching cubist bird surmounting the head. Painted in muted ochre colours. Ex-collection Barbara Perry, Sydney collected in the field 1968-69.

Size: 42 x 26 cm

\$ 1,400





29. TAMBUL SHIELD
WESTERN HIGHLANDS, PNG

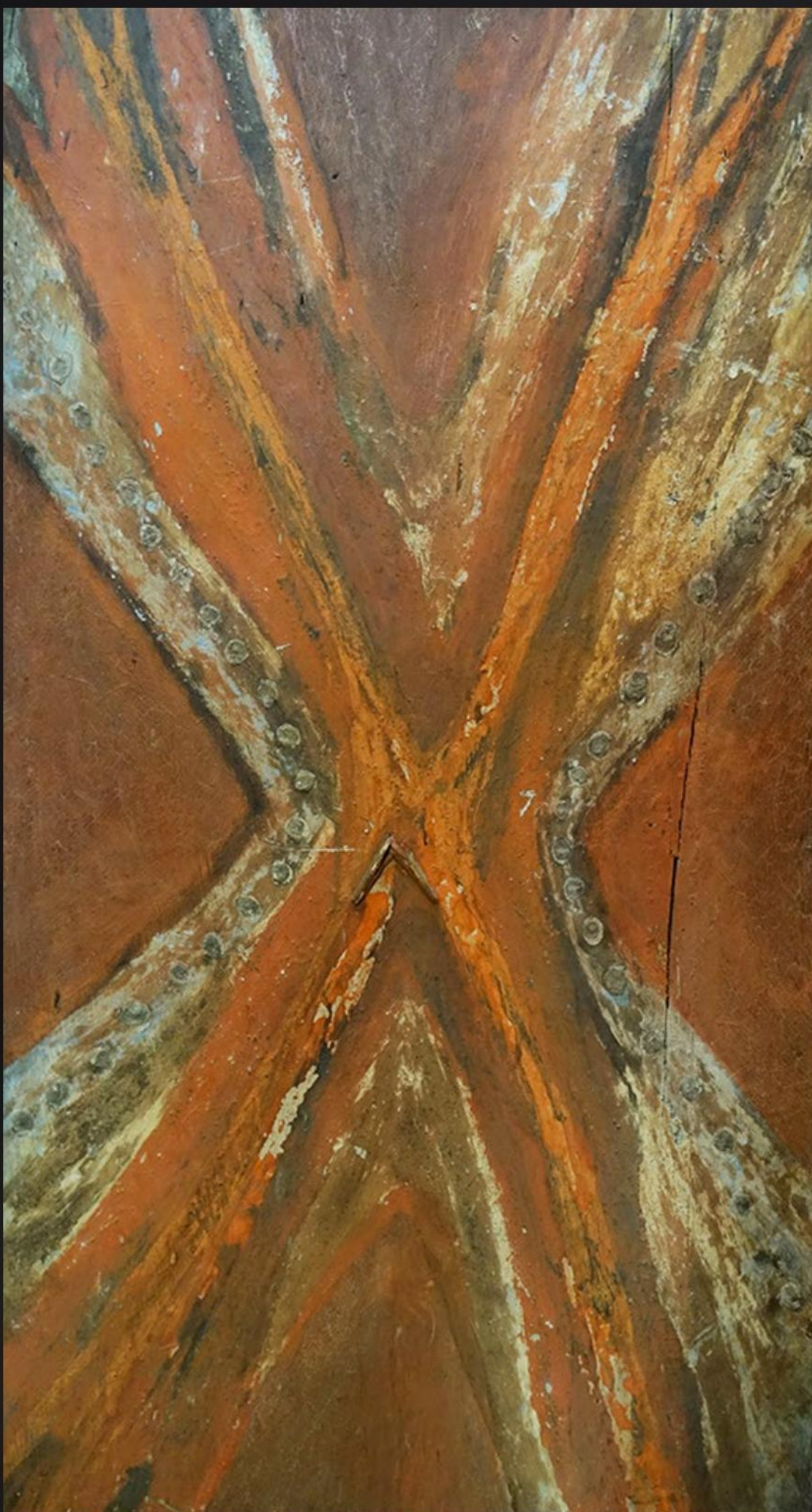
This is an ancient shield, most probably pre-contact, from the region around Tambul at the western edge of the Western Highlands. The shields here are smaller than those from the main Wahgi Valley. The fine weaving at the top is not the original but replaced more recently. The paintwork has many layers, suggesting many wars and many re-paintings. On the back, there is usually a centrally placed horizontal wooden batten to strengthen the shield; it is gone, but its impression remains. Collected by Thomas Surie, a local Tambul man, in the mid-1990s.

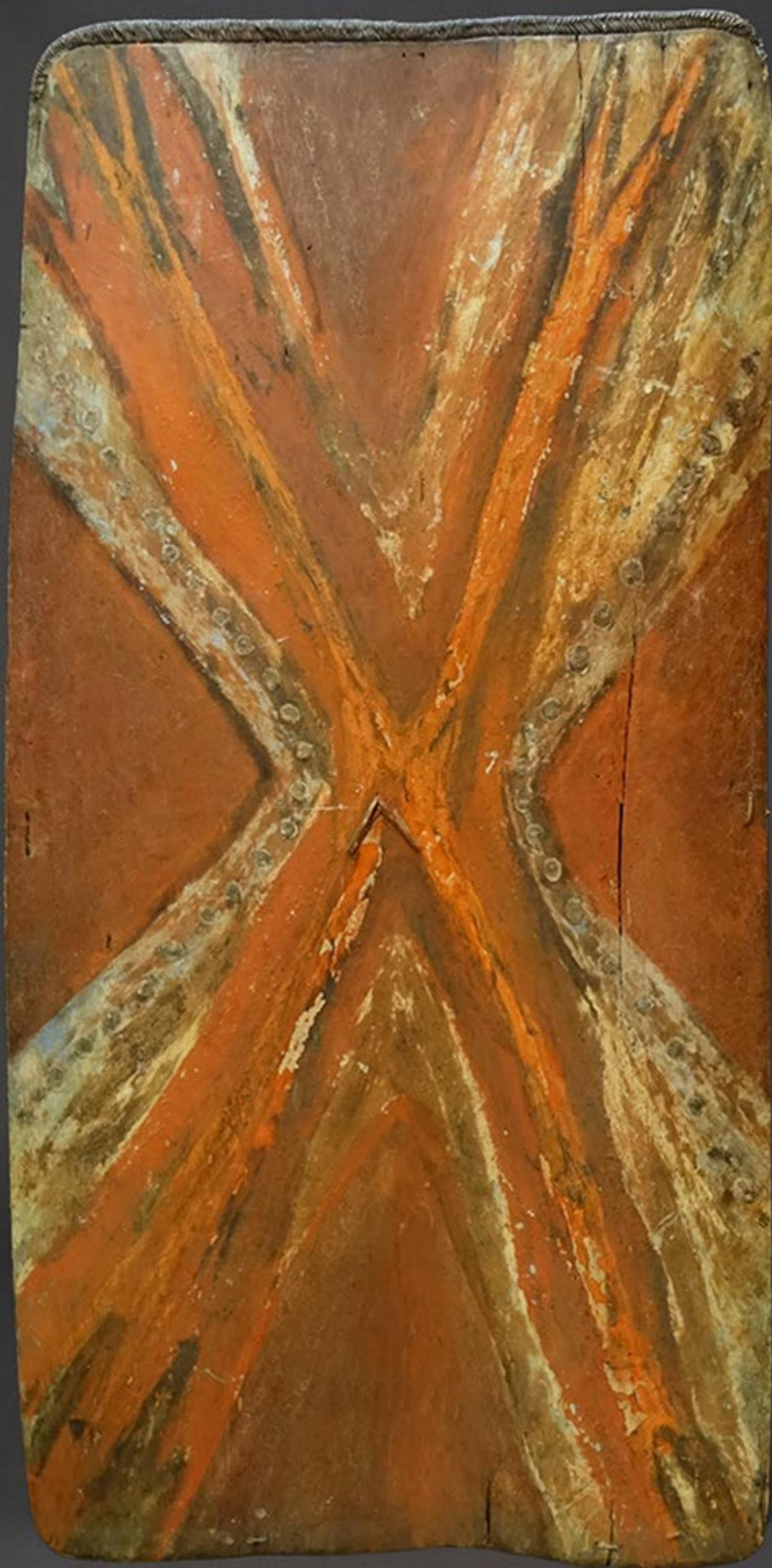
Size: 144 x 72 cm (56" x 30")

\$ 4,000



View of the Wahgi Valley, where the world's largest shields were made and used over many thousands of years, before the arrival of the outside world in the 1930s.





30. TWO MASKS FROM VANUATU

a) Ritual Mask, Malekula, Vanuatu. Ex-Judith Wood collection. Mid-20thC. Fine, evocative mask made of leaves, clay and spider-web. It was most probably mounted on a pole in ceremony, rather than worn, painted in orange and blue, with two large pig tusks.

b) Dance Mask, depicting shark spirit, Malekula, Vanuatu. This is quite a rare mask, with few in collections. One can be found in the St Louis Museum, USA.

Ex-German coll, ex-Mark Lissauer, Melbourne. Early 20thC

a) 20 x 25 x 24

b) 73 x 29 x 22

a) \$ 2,800

b) \$ 2.800





31. TWO ANCESTOR FIGURES
LOWER SEPIK RIVER
CIRCA. 1950S-1960S

a) Ancestor Figure, Lower Sepik River. Collected c 1960 by Peter Mann in the Angoram area.

b) Ancestor Figure, Lower Sepik River, possibly Yuat River. Collected early 1970s, but most probably 20-30 years older.

a) 47 x 11 x 10 cm (19" x 4.5" x 4")

b) 40 x 11 x 9 cm (16" x 4.5" x 4")

a) \$ 1,400

b) \$ 1,400





32. SKIRT BOARD KAIDAWAGA, TROBRIAND ISLANDS.

These elaborately carved boards, using the abstract motifs typical of Trobriand Island design, are used in the preparation of the Trobriand women's most sacred ceremony, Sagali. Sagali is a mortuary exchange ceremony, where women present grass skirts and bundles of patterned banana leaves, called nungia. The banana leaf strips have patterns impressed by rubbing them across the kaidawaga board, using a wooden beater or stone. Men carve the kaidawaga board for their wife or sister, engraved with markings called ginigini. These patterned leaves have magical significance. At the base, a word is carved that may be the name of the owner, or the carver. The two circles either side depict the circular head ornament worn by Trobriand women in ceremony.

Size: 54 x 24 cm (22" X 10

\$ 750



Kaidawaga board being used by a Trobriand woman to produce patterned offerings for the Sagali ceremony.

Photos: Joanna Rains





33. SHIELD
WAHGI VALLEY
WESTERN HIGHLANDS, PNG.

This is a fine old shield. It has various layers of paint when viewed closely; and a woven cane top edge, using very fine canework. The white painted design is unusual, having the typical circle in the centre, then a multitude of radiating points, that may suggest an antropomorphic form (with multitude of arms and legs), or alternatively a "Sun" motif, with radiating rays.

Size: 164 x 69 (66" x 28")

\$ 5,000



Two traditional Highlands shields
from the Wahgi Valley.
Photo: Stan Moriarty, 1963.







Bruce and Ramine Seaman at the San Francisco Tribal Art Show in 2014.

Bruce and Ramine Seaman were always regular visitors to the San Francisco Tribal Art Show, from its earliest days. Over his lifetime Bruce Seaman, supported by Ramine, built up one of the most important collections of Oceanic art in the world. Bruce and Ramine both passed away in 2022 (Bruce in May, Ramine in October). This photo is a small tribute to their passion for the collection of this wonderful art that created such a great joy in their lives.

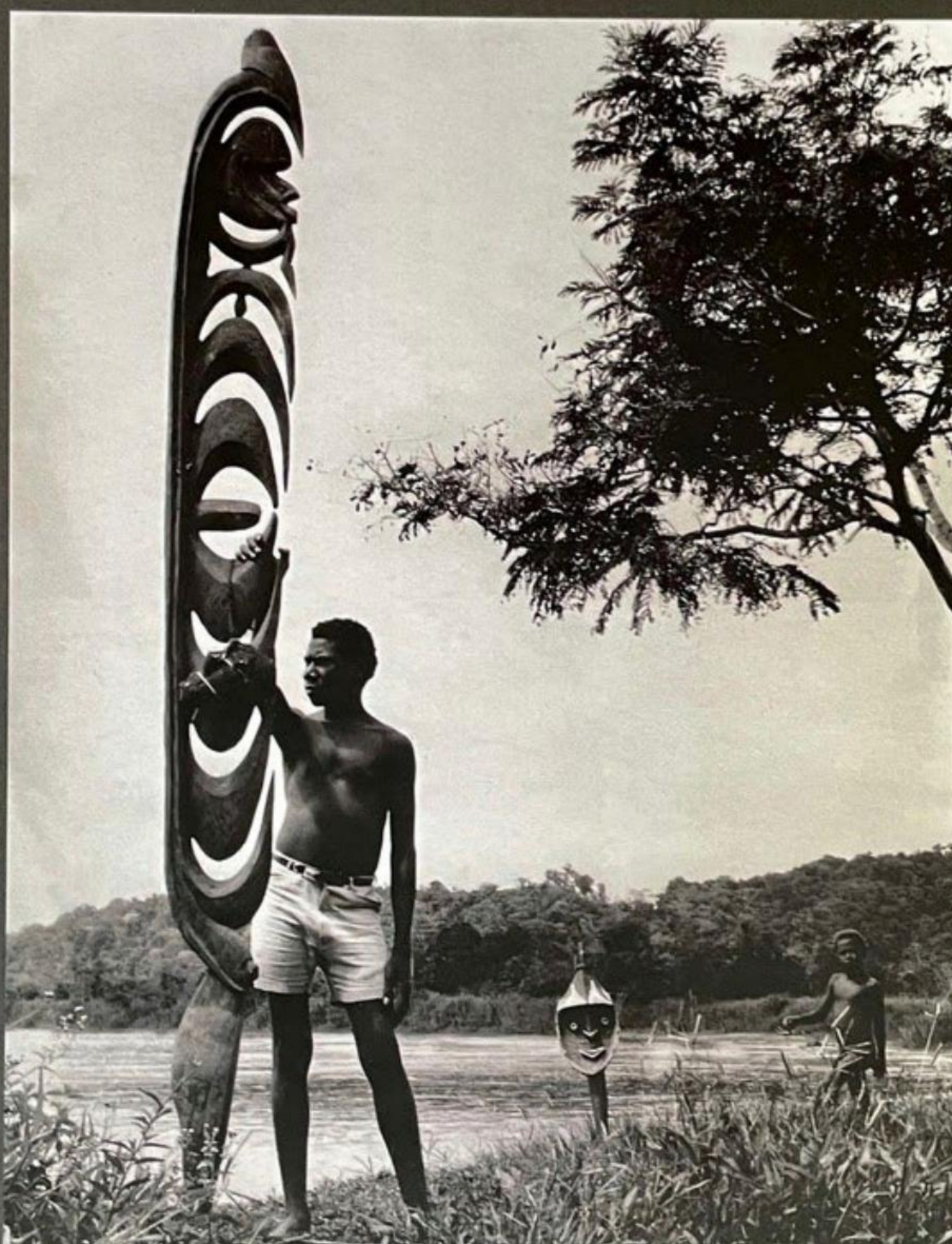
A book documenting Bruce and Ramine's early life, and Bruce's many, many trips to New Guinea, including several trips with Ramine and their two sons, Terii and Hanui, was launched at the Parcours des Mondes, Paris in 2023. It was written by Michael Martin and produced by Terii Seaman.



"The Seaman Collection of New Guinea Art"
Book launch, Parcours des Mondes,
Paris, September 2023.

THE SEAMAN COLLECTION

of New Guinea Art



Michael Martin

THE BOOK DOES NOT HAVE AN OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTOR, BUT CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:

Terii Seaman, French Polynesia. 10,000 XPF + postage contact: (tesawasa@gmail.com)

Michael Hamson, USA. \$85US + \$5 postage contact: (mhamson@michaelhamson.com)

Chris Boylan, Australia & NZ. \$100AUD + postage contact: (cboylan@tpg.com.au)

Julien Flak, Paris (European distributor). 80 Euros + postage contact: (julien@galerieflak.com)

